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ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

General Patrick, Provost Marshal General of the Army of the Potomac, is about to take the field at the head of a division. It is not yet determined who his successor will be, but the probabilities are that Colonel Sharpe, Deputy Provost Marshal General, will take charge of that department.

Conscripts are daily arriving and being assigned to regiments at the front. Last week, out of three hundred of this class sent to the Fifth Corps, two hundred and ninety-nine were substitutes, but one individual being a drafted man.

The Brooklyn 14th regiment has sent a detachment to New York for seven hundred conscripts, apportioned to that regiment. This regiment has suffered most severely, and, although numbers of recruits have arrived from time to time, it now musters less than one hundred men. Very few officers are left, and of the original organization there are less than a score of survivors.

During the last week our cavalry have been engaged in arresting all inhabitants north of the Rappahannock, as far down as Belle Plain. Among them are a number of loyal men; but to make any distinction in their cases would have subjected them to the risk of imprisonment in Richmond, and accordingly all were brought off. Those who decline to take the oath of allegiance will be held for exchange for Union men imprisoned by the Confederates.

A great number of nine months' and two years troops are returning to the field, many of them in the capacity of substitutes. Several of their officers have also rejoined the service.

Nine of Moseby's guerillas, caught in the vicinity of Warrenton, have been brought to Washington.

Twenty deserters were brought in handcuffed this morning by a detachment of the Invalid Corps and turned over to the Provost Marshal. Great exertions are being made at present to arrest all runaways and have them returned to their respective regiments. It is well known here that if General Meade had with him every soldier who properly belongs to the Army of the Potomac he would not long remain inactive on the Rappahannock.

By order of the Secretary of War all applications of quartermasters, commissaries and paymasters, for changes of station, or to be exempted from the operation of orders of assignments to stations, on the score of ill health, will hereafter be taken as confessions of inability to perform official duty on account of physical incapacity, and equivalent to tenders of resignation. The officers concerned will, in the ordinary course, be mustered out hereupon as in cases of accepted resignation.

An order from the War Department discontinues the fourth army corps, and the troops composing it are distributed to other corps.—The seventh army corps is also discontinued, and the troops composing it are transferred to the eighteenth corps, under the command of General Foster.

THE SIEGE OF CHARLESTON.

HILTON HEAD, S. C., Aug. 5.—Within the past three days Gen. Gilmore has added numerous and heavy guns to his line of attack, and the unceasing toil day and night of the men upon the trenches indicates that work of a different character will soon commence. It would perhaps be superfluous to add that reinforcements have been arriving at Morris Island since the late fight, so that the strength of the Confederates, when the next battle occurs, will be severely tested. These reinforcements are greatly needed, as many of the soldiers who have been digging in the trenches and attending to other duties are completely worn out from continued exposure and labor.

The public may rest assured that the heavy ordnance now trained and to be trained on Forts Sumter and Wagner will be manned by men who have been educated to the business. About 300 marines, under command of Major Jacob Zedlin, came in to-day from New York. —[Cor. N. Y. Times.

An affair occurred at Camp Barry, on Saturday, of a novel character. Colonel Monroe and Major De Peyster are the parties; both of these officers belong to the artillery service. The major entered the colonel's tent and announced to him that he came to chastise him, for some real or fancied injury. Col. Monroe was sitting or lying down at the time, and he was commanded to rise by Major De Peyster. The latter was ordered to leave his tent by the former. Instead of obeying orders, the major is reported to have drawn from under his coat a cowhide, and tapped the Col. gently on the shoulder with it, in order to induce him to rise. Col. Monroe did rise, and Major De Peyster fell—at least so the story runs. As soon as knocked down, the Major was placed in charge of a guard.

The French preserve grapes the year round by coating the clusters with lime. The bunches are picked just before they are thoroughly ripe, and dipped in lime water of the consistency of cream. They are then hung up to remain. The lime coating keeps out air, and checks any tendency to decay. When wanted for the table, dip the clusters into warm water to remove the lime.

At the latest dates from Vicksburg, General Banks had just arrived there on a visit to General Grant. The British Consul at New Orleans and the commander of a French man-of-war in port, accompanied General Banks on his visit to Vicksburg.

An attempt was made by a strange steamer to overhaul the steamer Arago on her outward passage to Port Royal, but the Arago proved too fast a sailer.

One substitute furnished in Washington yesterday, testified that he was in the Confederate service during the first of the war, in a Virginia regiment, and had since taken the oath of allegiance to the United States. He was born in Michigan, and is a blacksmith. He was warned of the risk that he took in case of capture by the Confederates, but still "went in."

GEN. FOSTER'S EXPEDITION.

The expedition that left Fortress Monroe on the 4th instant, under the direction of Gen. Foster, was accompanied by the turret iron-clad Sangamon and gunboats Commodore Barney and Cohasset. They proceeded up the James river, and when above City Point, and within about seven miles of Fort Darling, at a point called Dutch Gap, a torpedo was exploded under the bows of the Commodore Barney by a lock string connecting with the shore. The explosion is described as most terrific, lifting the bows of the Commodore Barney completely out of the water full ten feet, and throwing a great quantity of water high into the air, which fell upon the deck of the boat, washing overboard fifteen of her men, among whom was Lieutenant Cushing, the commander of the Commodore Barney.—Two of their number (sailors) were drowned. The others were saved. Gen. Foster was upon this boat when the explosion took place.—The Confederates then opened on them from shore with twelve-pounder field pieces. Some fifteen shots penetrated the Barney, besides a great number of musket balls, and not a man injured except the Paymaster, slightly with splinters. The gunboat Cohasset received five twelve-pound shot, one passing through the pilot-house, killing the commander, Acting Master Cox. The shot struck him in the back, killing him instantly. The Commodore Barney was towed down to Newport News by a tug, and will be repaired. The fleet has returned. The new army gunboat Gen. Jesup, commanded by Lt. Col. Whipple, also accompanied the expedition, and received several shots, but was not much injured.

A new court-martial was organized yesterday at Gen. Heintzleman's headquarters. The court consists of Brigadier Gen. Slough, (President,) Colonels Piper, Wistler, Tracy, and Hudson, and Captains Howard, and Hopper, with Major Gaines as Judge Advocate. Possibly this court was convened as the successor of the one dissolved about a week since by the Secretary of War, and of which Gen. Hitchcock was President. The first person to be tried is Detective White, of the force of Col. Fish, provost marshal of Baltimore. He is charged with having, at different times, and from various persons, received money for procuring passes to the South, to the amount of \$700.

The Army of the Potomac seems to be undergoing a thorough reorganization. Instead of filling up those corps which have been greatly weakened by losses sustained during the recent campaign, the men are to be transferred to other corps whose casualties have been fewer. The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger also hints at the probability of another "change of base," for sanitary reasons.

An officer of one of the Illinois regiments in the army of the West, says: "In our expedition along the Yazoo river bottoms we passed through a cornfield thirty miles in extent. The corn exceeded anything I have ever seen in Illinois."